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Tobacco-Free Lee Coalition Observes World No Tobacco Day on May 31 at Fort Myers Beach

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Fort Myers, Fla. – The Tobacco-Free Lee Coalition and Lee County youth will host a tobacco debris “Sweep the Beach” event to observe World No Tobacco Day on May 31, 2019 at Fort Myers Beach – Times Square on Estero Boulevard from 9AM to 11AM. This event is being held to raise awareness on the harmful and deadly effects of tobacco use and second-hand smoke exposure, and to discourage the use of tobacco in any form.

Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States, accounting for more than 480,000 deaths every year.¹ Tobacco smoking is the primary cause for lung cancer, responsible for over two-thirds of cancer deaths globally.² Tobacco smoking is also the leading cause of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.²

Lee County tobacco use concerns also include environmental damage rendered to our beaches and marine life due to tobacco debris. Since the 1980s, cigarette butts have consistently comprised 30 to 40 percent of all items collected in annual international coastal and urban cleanups according to the World Health Organization. Data from the Ocean Conservancy shows that 1,030,640 cigarette butts were removed from U.S. beaches and inland waterways as part of the annual International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) in 2016; cigarette butts were the most prevalent item found.³

World No Tobacco Day is observed around the world every year on May 31. It is intended to encourage a 24-hour period of abstinence from all forms of tobacco consumption around the globe. Floridians who want to quit any form of tobacco have access to the state’s free and proven-effective resources. For more information, please visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/quityourway.

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1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General](#). Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014 [accessed 2019 Jan 30].
 2. <https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2019/05/31/default-calendar/world-no-tobacco-day>
 3. Ocean Conservancy. International Coastal Cleanup 2017 Report. Ocean Conservancy2017.